

200 Nolden Lane  
Jordan, Minnesota 55252  
March 26, 2003

Chief, Standardization Branch  
Livestock and Seed Program  
AMS, USDA, Room 2603-S, Stop 0254  
Washington, D.C. 20250-0254

Gentlepersons:

I am concerned about your proposed meat marketing labeling claims and standards. I am concerned that these claims could undermine the integrity of the labels they seek to define and mislead consumers. In addition they would have a devastating affect on small and mid-sized farmers who are the real pioneers of these marketing claims.

It concerns me that you did not take enough time to get input from family farmers, consumers, humane and environmental groups in drafting the proposed standards. Instead you conferred primarily with large-scale industrial agricultural interests. You are in your position to serve all Americans. You are suspect when you confer with one special interest only and then frame the standards to primarily serve their interest.

For example, "no subtherapeutic antibiotics added" has serious definitional problems. To claim "no detectable antibiotic residue" is misleading to me a consumer.

I ask you to

- withdraw the proposed meat marketing claims and standards and start over.
- consult closely with family farm, consumer, humane, and environmental organizations before issuing a final proposal.

It is important for me to be able to purchase grass-fed, free-range, and antibiotic free meat. I want USDA claims to meet my expectations so that I can feel confident about what the label says. Further, I want to support farmers and ranchers who are working hard to ensure that these claims are met in the ways they produce food and who deserve a fair return for this service.

Thank you for your efforts to keep me confident that labeling claims can be trusted.

Sincerely,



Mary M. Tacheny

Cc: Senator Mark Dayton  
Senator Norm Coleman  
Representative John Kline